At Finnish grocery stores, a slow checkout lane for the elderly and disabled

We've already seen signs of a “slowness” trend in the form of relaxing beverages, and now a similar theme seems to be popping up in the grocery store checkout. Dubbed "El h tt ile,” the slow-track checkout lane at Finnish K-citymarket is aimed at the elderly, the disabled, and anyone else who wants a more relaxed shopping experience.

Inspiration for the new, slow checkout came from a survey of mentally disabled youths living in Espoo, according to a press release from K-citymarket parent company Kesko. A key finding of that survey was that many of the individuals felt stressed at supermarket checkouts, motivating a pilot test by Kesko in cooperation with Aalto University's MIND research group. At the slow-track checkout, the checkout assistant serves customers “according to their needs,” Kesko explains, which can include putting goods on the checkout belt, helping customers make payments, and packing. The process is adapted to the customer's pace, including time for conversation; an armchair is on hand for customers to relax in while they're awaiting their turn.

Following the conclusion of the pilot, Kesko will decide whether to expand the project further, it says. So far, it's also noticed that young kids also enjoy using the armchairs while their parents go through the checkout line. Grocers and other retailers around the globe: one to think about!

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